

NCTA DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to describe procedures and requirements for distance learning courses at NCTA, which includes courses described as online, dual credit, or concurrent enrollment.

Policy Outline

- A) Policy overview and course definitions
 - B) Course requirements and approval process
 - C) Faculty training requirements for distance learning teaching
 - D) Faculty remuneration for distance learning teaching
 - E) Resources and supporting services for distance learning
- Appendix 1 – Distance Learning Course Approval Form
Appendix 2 – Documentation of Faculty Training for Distance Learning Teaching

A) Policy Overview and Course Definitions

Distance learning refers to **dual credit** courses and courses delivered via **online** methods of instruction.

Online presentation of course material is the only form of instruction addressed in this policy. Hybrid courses that contain a maximum of 50% instruction online follow course requirements for face-to-face courses and have the same student learning outcomes and assessment procedures as the comparable face-to-face course. Courses taught via real-time video instruction follow normal NCTA classroom policies.

Online distance learning courses for degree seeking students have a section code of 700, dual credit and concurrent courses have a section code of 800 or 900, and online courses for non-degree seeking students have a section code of 500. For the purposes of this policy, **dual credit courses** are college courses taken by high school students which are designed to provide the opportunity for the student to earn simultaneous high school credit and college credit. **Concurrent courses** are college courses taken by high school students which allow the students the opportunity to earn college credit without regard to high school credit considerations.

This NCTA distance learning policy was developed with consideration of the best practices and recommendations made in the *Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education* developed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (2011), *Quality Matters*, and the Online Learning Consortium quality scorecard.

B) Course Requirements and Approval Process

Course requirements:

- **Student Learning:** Distance learning courses are college-level and are of the same high quality, cover the same content, and have the same rigor as other college-credit courses offered by NCTA. Faculty may consider inclusion of an online education orientation session to assist first time students in achieving success with online education.
- **Course Consistency:** Distance learning courses have the same student learning outcomes and assessment protocol as face-to-face courses. Courses are generally delivered with the Canvas web-based learning management system.
- **Quality Faculty:** Distance learning courses will be offered through NCTA by instructors who meet NCTA accreditation.
 - Faculty teaching Dual Credit courses also meet Nebraska Department of Education requirements

- **Regular and substantive interaction:** All distance learning courses will involve regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor. Faculty will document the method of creating this involvement prior to offering the course. Examples of regular and substantive interaction include regular participation in discussion boards, regular email communication, or regular communication via video phone technology such as Skype or Adobe Connect.
- **Due dates:** All distance learning courses will have set due dates for assignments and exams.
- **Regular semester scheduling:** Distance learning courses will generally follow semester scheduling. Courses will start at the beginning of the semester and end at the end of the semester.
- **Student identity verification:** All faculty teaching distance learning courses will document a robust method of identifying students during assessment activities. Generally, student identity is verified through high school teacher or public library librarian proctors. In all cases, students will be required to use a secure login and passcode (i.e through the myNCTA system). Password recovery is required via secure technology such as the use of a secret question or a two factor authentication protocol such as texting to a cell phone or sending a separate recovery email. Alternate methods of student identity verification must be documented by the faculty member. Additional methods may include video confirmation of identity using technology such as Skype or Adobe Connect.

Parameters Specific to Dual Credit Courses

Dual Credit refers to granting simultaneous high school credit and college credit for the same course. Students participating in dual credit courses are enrolled in a course which satisfies both high school and college requirements. Courses are generally offered at the high school in cooperation with the local school district. The local school district will govern the granting of high school credit. Dual credit courses are offered according to these guidelines in addition to the previously described requirements:

- Students must enroll as an NCTA student in the dual credit program.
- Students will be subject to all NCTA's policies and procedures, including grade appeal procedures.
- Dual credit courses are college level courses and students will be required to achieve at the college level to receive credit.
 - Students enrolling in dual credit courses must possess the academic ability and the emotional maturity needed to succeed in college courses.
 - Students enrolling in dual credit courses must be high school students with junior or senior status, or sophomores if they have written permission from the high school counselor.
- Scholarships may be available for dual credit courses. Students may submit an application for the ACE Scholarship
- The NCTA faculty member is the certifying instructor and performs the following duties:
 - Selects the textbook to be used
 - Develops a comprehensive syllabus
 - Creates the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)
 - Provides instructional materials through a web-based learning management system
 - Provides course assessment tools and conducts the assessment
 - Determines final grades for the course
 - Assesses student progress towards achievement of course SLOs
- Supplemental instruction may be provided at remote sites by local coaches or mentors. In addition, up to 25% of the primary instruction may also be provided by local mentors.

Distance Learning Course Approval Process

The following distance learning course approval process is for dual credit courses and courses delivered via online methods of instruction. Courses that have regular face-to-face interaction between the instructor of record and the student follow normal course approval policies.

All distance learning courses must be evaluated and approved in accordance to the standards outlined in the Distance Learning Course Approval Form (Appendix 1) prior to inclusion in the Schedule of Classes published each session. NCTA's Academic Council will serve as the approval board for distance learning courses.

Course Syllabus

The syllabus for a distance learning course must comply with all requirements for normal course offerings. Appropriate revisions that reflect the distance nature of the course compared to normal face-to-face instruction must be made. Instructors should also note the requirements outlined in the Distance Learning Course Approval Form (Appendix 1) and develop syllabi that reflect the details required for course approval.

Steps to course approval

- 1) Prior to developing a distance learning course, the instructor verifies the need for the course with Academic Council.
- 2) Instructor fully develops the course to ensure all the standards described in the Distance Learning Course Approval Form (Appendix 1) are met. This includes.....
 - Fully developed syllabus
 - Fully developed online course material
- 3) Instructor submits the course to their Division Chair for Approval.
- 4) Division Chair submits the course to Academic Council for Approval.
- 5) Academic Council reviews the course according to the standards outlined in the "Distance Learning Course Approval Form."
 - Includes verification that instructor has met required training in online/distance learning education.
- 6) Academic Council either approve/rejects the course based on the standards.
 - Approved courses may be offered for the next available academic session.
 - Rejected courses may be revised and resubmitted for approval.

Annual Review

To ensure instructional quality is maintained, all distance learning courses will be reviewed annually following a comparable procedure to normal courses offered on-campus. This annual review will include the following:

- 1) Division chair review as part of the annual faculty review process.
- 2) Student evaluations of the course and instruction.
- 3) Completed SLO reports for the course.

C) Training Requirements for Distance Learning Teaching

To ensure that NCTA maintains a high level of academic quality in courses offered via distance learning, all distance learning instructors must comply with the requirements documented in this policy prior to offering the course. Instructors that are already offering distance learning courses prior to development of this policy must comply by May 1, 2017. Complete the documentation of training form (Appendix 2).

Requirement 1 – Proficiency in utilizing the Canvas learning management system.

- Instructors can meet this requirement by documenting a minimum of 3-years of using the Canvas system for course instruction or completing an approved Canvas Training Session such as the Canvas 101 for Instructors by UNL.

Requirement 2 - instructors are required to complete at least one course from the options listed below.

- Training that is comparable to the options listed below may be used as a substitute if approved by Academic Council.
- Instructors are reminded that funds are available to assist in professional development activities such as the required training options below ([Professional Development Funding](#)).

Options for instructors with little to no online teaching experience:

Course	Prerequisite	Duration
Quality Matters (QM): Designing Your Online Course	None	2 weeks (Online)
QM: Designing Your Blended Course	None	2 weeks (Online)
QM - Teaching Online: An Introduction to Online Delivery	None	2 weeks (Online)
UNL Summer Institute for Online Teaching	None	5 weeks (Hybrid)

Options for instructors who have several years of online teaching experience:

Course	Prerequisite	Duration
Online Learning Consortium (OLC) Teaching Certificate	Online teaching experience or completed OLC preliminary course: “New to Online: The Essentials”	10 weeks for course, plus 3 electives (Online)
Quality Matters: Improving Your Online Course	An online course to improve	2 weeks (Online)
UNL Summer Institute for Online Teaching	None	5 weeks (Hybrid)

D) Faculty Remuneration for Teaching Distance Learning Courses

Online courses (700 section courses) are considered a normal part of a faculty member’s workload and are treated the same as face-to-face courses when considering faculty workload. For additional details on faculty workload consult the Faculty Workload Policy and the Adjunct Faculty Remuneration Policy. Faculty teaching dual credit or concurrent enrollment courses offered to high school students may receive remuneration based on the following procedures.

- Full-time faculty not teaching a full load as defined by the faculty workload policy may use dual credit courses to meet their teaching load. Under these circumstances, faculty will not receive extra compensation for teaching dual credit courses. Each division chair will assume the responsibility for determining if the faculty member is teaching dual credit as part of a standard teaching load or as overload. The division chair will inform the Associate Dean’s office on this issue. Faculty teaching dual credit as an overload assignment will receive extra compensation for teaching dual credit courses.
- As extra compensation for teaching dual credit courses, full-time and adjunct faculty will receive \$20 per student credit hour completed (example: 10 students x 3 credits x \$20 = \$600) up to a maximum of \$800 per credit per course taught.
- Compensation per course will be capped at these levels: 1 credit = \$800 cap, 2 credits = \$1600 cap, 3 credits = \$2400 cap, 4 credits = \$3200 cap

- If multiple sections of a dual credit or online course are offered, all students are considered part of one section for pay considerations until enrollment exceeds 50 students. Faculty teaching a section with 51 or more students will receive compensation equivalent to teaching two sections.
- Payment for teaching will be made the month following receipt of final grades by the registrar.
- The Business Office will track, record and process payment request for course completers.
- Notification of proposed payment with course title, number of students completing course and dollar amount will be sent to instructor, Division Chair, Dean and Business Manager prior to payment.

Steps in the Process for Approval of Compensation for Teaching a Distance Learning Course

1. To receive compensation for teaching 500 and 800/900 courses, faculty submits the completed Faculty Workload form to the Administrative Support Assistant at the beginning of each semester.
2. At end of the semester, payments are made for semester credit hours after final grades are posted to PeopleSoft. Payment is only made for students in the dual credit (800/900) classes and non-degree seeking on-line (500) courses.
3. Compensation is only made for course completion. This includes students that earned a failing grade with documented course completion, but does not include students who receive an Incomplete.
4. The Administrative Support assistant will prepare payment request spreadsheet for the Business Office and send faculty member an email notification of proposed payment.
5. Faculty compensation when an incomplete is resolved
 - a. Upon completion of course requirements, faculty must submit a grade change form to receive compensation. Only grades changes to a passing grade are eligible.
 - b. Registration/Records will receive the grade change forms from instructors and submit copy to the Administrative Support Assistant.
 - c. The Administrative Support Assistant will verify the grade change and submit payment request spreadsheet to the Business Office and send email to faculty member notifying them of their proposed payment.

E) Resources and Supporting Services

The following services and centers are available to support quality online academic experiences for NCTA faculty, staff and students:

- **Computer Help Center.** The Information Technology Services Computer Help Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln provides NCTA students with 24 hour access to help with issues such as accessing E-mail and Canvas and dealing with computer problems. (Web site: <http://its.unl.edu/helpcenter>, E-mail: mysupport@unl.edu, Phone: toll-free (866) 472-3970)
- **Writing Center and Math Tutoring Services Center.** The NCTA Writing Center and Math Tutoring Services provides writing assistance for resumes, cover-letters, classroom assignments and other documents. The Math Tutoring Services Center provides real-time and asynchronous assistance with math problems. Students receive a reply from a credentialed faculty member within 24 hours of making an inquiry. (Writing Center: Eric Reed at ereed2@unl.edu or 308-367-5276. Math Tutoring Services Center: Tee Bush at tbush@unl.edu or 308-367-5203)
- **University of Nebraska Love Library Access.** University of Nebraska libraries provides interlibrary loan services as well as access to over 250 on-line sources, among them numerous

databases containing thousands of professional and peer-reviewed scholarly journals. (Website: <http://libraries.unl.edu/love-library>, Email: askus@unl.edu, Phone: 402-472-9568)

- **Student Services Center.** NCTA is committed to equal access in education. The Disability Services Center assists online students with questions regarding eligibility and applying for accommodations, testing for learning disabilities, and development of Individualized Education Program (IEP) agreements. Financial aid counseling and assistance is also available online through telephone, email, Skype or Adobe connect. Contact Kevin Martin: 308-367-5217, or email: Kmartin4@UNL.edu.
- **Instructional Design Services.** Assistance with planning, organizing and offering online courses is available to faculty. Professional designers at the University of Nebraska are available to help faculty members create instructional experiences that maximize student online learning experiences. Contact Tina Smith at 308-367-5267, or email: Tsmith24@UNL.edu.
- **NCTA Computer Technology Assistance.** The NCTA director of instructional technology and telecom is available to assist with hardware, software and peripheral acquisition, set up and troubleshooting. Contact Justin Baugher at 308-367-5210, or email: justin.baugher@unl.edu.
- **Anti-virus software** for UNL students, faculty, and staff, even for personal computers: <http://antivirus.unl.edu/>
- **Box** account with unlimited cloud storage: <http://box.unl.edu/>.
- **TechSmith Lecture and Video Capture** software for faculty: <http://its.unl.edu/t3/lecture-capture-camtasia-relay-will-become-techsmith-relay>. (This technology allows a faculty member to capture anything on a computer screen, video, audio, etc. and then to create and store a video for streaming and download).
- **Canvas Learning Management System** help and training resources are available: <https://community.canvaslms.com/>
- **Anti-plagiarism software** is integrated into the Canvas learning management system.
- **Instructional Technology** training for faculty: <http://its.unl.edu/itskills>
- Access to over a thousand **instructional training** and software video tutorials for NCTA faculty may be found here: <http://its.unl.edu/itskills/online-tutorials>.

Appendix 1 - Distance Learning Course Approval Form

All of the following standards must be determined as acceptable by Academic Council for full course approval. These standards are based on established NCTA policies and the *Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education* developed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (2011), *Quality Matters*, and the Online Learning Consortium quality scorecard (<http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/consult/quality-scorecard/>).

Course Name and Number: _____

Course Instructor: _____

<u>Instructor Qualifications</u>	Acceptable (yes or no)
Instructor meets NCTA requirements described in the Faculty Qualifications Policy.	
Instructor has met required training in online/distance learning education.	
<u>Course Overview and Introduction</u>	Acceptable (yes or no)
Instructions make clear how to get started and find course components.	
Students are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.	
Course and/or institutional policies with which the student is expected to comply are clearly stated or linked.	
Prerequisite knowledge and minimum technical skills expected of the student are clearly stated.	
<u>Student Learning Outcomes</u>	Acceptable (yes or no)
SLO's are clearly stated and are equivalent to regular offerings of the course.	
SLO statements in the syllabus follow NCTA guidelines.	
<u>Assessment and Measurement</u>	Acceptable (yes or no)
The types of assessments selected are consistent to regular offerings of the course.	
The course grading policy is clearly stated.	
Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of student's work and participation and are tied to the course grading policy.	
Documented methods of student identity verification.	

<u>Instructional Materials</u>	Acceptable (yes or no)
The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes for the course.	
The purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learning activities are clearly explained.	
<u>Learner Interaction and Engagement</u>	Acceptable (yes or no)
Clearly states how regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor will be achieved.	
The requirements for student interaction are clearly articulated.	
Established due dates for assignments and exams.	
<u>Course Technology</u>	Acceptable (yes or no)
Students can readily access the technologies required in the course.	
The tools and media support the course's student learning outcomes.	
<u>Learner Support</u>	Acceptable (yes or no)
The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to access it.	
The course instructions articulate or link academic resources and/or support that are available to the student.	

Approval Signatures

Division Chair

Date

Academic Council Chairperson

Date

